

Michigan Community for A Lifetime
Application for Elder Friendly Community
Recognition Program

Michigan Office of Services to the Aging
Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging
State Advisory Council on Aging
Michigan State University Extension

March 2011

BACKGROUND

In April 2004, the State Advisory Council on Aging issued its annual report to the Michigan Commission on Aging on “Elder Friendly Communities.” The Council’s recommendation was: “The Commission and Office of Services to the Aging should become active participants and state leaders in initiatives to create “healthy communities for all ages.”

The Council had examined the community assets that made a community more “livable” for older adults and the array of models available to communities to assess their strengths and challenges. In their reports, the Council identified seven attributes that made a community livable. Other entities have identified similar factors that make a community livable. The goal of improving community attributes to be responsive to the needs of older adults and others cuts across the various assessments.

Following the 2004 report, MSU-Extension and their Vital Aging Think Tank joined with the Office of Services to the Aging to plan development of a Michigan Community for a Lifetime assessment. Working with both an Otsego County and a North Ottawa County community team in piloting and refining the materials, MSU-Extension was then able to develop an assessment that has ten livability attributes and action plan worksheets to help target community improvements. This assessment incorporates recommendations of the Council and all of these partners who worked together to develop it.

Michigan has benefited from a strong support for community-based initiatives from state and national organizations. Supporters include community foundations, the “Cool Cities” program, AARP, the National Area Agency on Aging Association, the Administration on Aging, among others. Since 2003, there have been community initiatives around the state working to make communities more livable.

The Commission on Services to the Aging, in conjunction with key partners, has established a recognition program for communities engaging in this task. Community improvement is, in many ways, its own reward. Nonetheless, the task of assessing a community’s assets requires time and dedication. Even “simple” changes, such as lengthening the traffic signal in a shopping area to allow pedestrians more time to cross the street, will require cooperation from many stakeholders. The Commission established this program to formally recognize these successful efforts, both as a small reward for their achievement and as a model to other communities.

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

There are several national models for assessing a community's assets. Some of the most widely used models are listed below, with links to additional information. Community groups may use any of the models.

"Community" is loosely defined for this program. It can range from an entire county, to a city, township, neighborhood block club or even a subdivision with a homeowners' association. Applicants are asked to define their community.

The first step is to conduct a community assessment. The assessment must be done as a task of a community group. The Commission recommends public participation and representation by older adults. Using an established assessment form, applicants will submit their findings. A face sheet, included below, should accompany the assessment results. A panel representing the Commission, the Council, the Office, and MSU will review the applications twice a year (in April and October).

Assessment is the first, but not the only activity for recognition. Using the assessment findings, the community group can identify a specific need for improvement. In reviewing the various models and successes in other communities around North America, the changes that improve the livability are often small in scale, but large in significance. Cities have lengthened the timing at crosswalks in shopping areas, added benches at bus stops or shopping areas, or repaired sidewalks in shopping districts. Some cities did parking renovations in shopping plazas or improved pedestrian access to city offices. Once an improvement has been made, the community can apply for additional recognition. There is no limit on the number of improvement recognitions a community may receive.

To apply for recognition, please complete the Application for Elder Friendly Community Recognition cover sheet using the application instruction pages that follow.

APPLICATION FOR ELDER FRIENDLY COMMUNITY RECOGNITION Cover Sheet

1. Applicant Name:	
2. Community (Please define, e.g., county, city, township, neighborhood, and describe. Attach sheets if necessary.)	
3. Assessments Used (Please check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> AdvantAge <input type="checkbox"/> Community for a Lifetime <input type="checkbox"/> Aging in Place <input type="checkbox"/> Livable communities <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	4. Assessments/Planning/Improvement Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Older adults <input type="checkbox"/> Local government officials/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit agencies <input type="checkbox"/> For profit businesses Please list all partners in application.
5. Did the partners reflect the geographic/cultural diversity of community, as defined above? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If not, please explain (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
6. Specify the livability categories addressed by this application. (Check all that apply) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Walkability/bikeability <input type="checkbox"/> Access to health care <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Health promotion/disease prevention </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety and security <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive community systems <input type="checkbox"/> Other: </div> </div>	
7. This application is for recognition of: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> (a) <u>Community Assessment</u> </div> <div style="width: 55%;"> Date assessment started: Date assessment completed: </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <u>Community Improvement</u> </div> <div style="width: 55%;"> Date of previous community assessment: </div> </div>	
8. Signature	Date
Telephone number (include area code)	E-mail

Please submit an original and 3 copies of your completed application to Dan Doezema, Office of Services to the Aging, PO Box 30676, Lansing, MI 48909-8176.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Applicant. The applicant's name is the same as the community group's name, e.g., Battle Creek Aging in Place Coalition.
2. "Community" is loosely defined to range from an entire county to a neighborhood block club or an apartment building with an aging population. Towns, townships, subdivisions with homeowners' associations can participate in the Community for a Lifetime Recognition program. Please define the "community" on the cover sheet.
3. There are several national models for assessing a community's assets for older residents. The most widely known models are listed. Applicants may use some or all of any of the models, but need to specify models used.
4. All the models require partners to do the assessment and work on the improvement. The application should include a full list of all partners and participants/public. The face sheet should indicate key partners.
5. Community assessment and improvements should reflect the population mix of the community defined above.
6. The various models have slightly different categories or assets. These 7 reflect those identified by the State Advisory Council on Aging. Applicants must specify which categories were assessed or improved and are not limited to these seven.
7. If this application is for recognition of conducting a **community assessment**, please indicate the start and end dates of the assessment activities.

If this application is for recognition of a **community improvement**, please provide the date of the previous community assessment.

8. For applications for recognition of a **community improvement**, please also provide a narrative describing:
 - A. The previous assessment factors and/or further planning efforts that targeted the area for improvement
 - B. The improvement made
 - C. How it was accomplished
 - D. The date it was completed
 - E. How this accomplishment improves the livability of your community for older adults and/or persons of all ages
 - F. Any other supporting documentation (pictures, flyers etc.) is welcomed
9. Applicants may apply for assessment and improvement recognition either together or separately.

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10. The person to be contacted about the application should sign, date and provide contact information.
11. Attach the cover sheet as the first page of the recognition application.
12. Categories assessed should include some explanations and assets should be noted as well. (Do not list all check marks or all “yes/no” findings.)
13. Applicants may submit one assessment and unlimited improvement applications for multiple recognitions.
14. The Community for a Lifetime review panel will review applications twice a year (April 1 and October 1), and applications are due to OSA by these dates.
15. For questions or technical assistance, contact Dan Doezema, OSA Lead Staff for Livable Communities, 231-929-2531, or e-mail Doezemad@michigan.gov.

Resources for “Elder Friendly/Livable Communities”

AdvantAge Initiative, Center for Home Care Policy and Research
Visiting Nurse Service of New York
<http://www.vnsny.org/advantage/>

“Communities For a Lifetime, Florida Department of Elder Affairs
<http://www.communitiesforalifetime.org>

AARP Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide
http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf

Local Government Commission, Center for Livable Communities
<http://www.lgc.org/center/index.html>

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Aging in Place Initiative
<http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/>

United Jewish Communities, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities:
Aging in Place
http://www.norcs.com/content_display.html?ArticleID=187869

Resource List of Planning Tools for Aging in Place
http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors/0,1607,7-234-43293_46728-184000--,00.html

Livable Communities Links
http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors/0,1607,7-234-43293_46728-170464--,00.html